

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ALBANY DIVISION

VICTOR BERNARD LYLES, SR., :
: Plaintiff :
: VS. :
DR. DeWAYNE AYERS, *et al.*, : NO. 1:06-cv-56(WLS)
: Defendants : **O R D E R**

Plaintiff **VICTOR BERNARD LYLES, SR.**, currently an inmate at Macon State Prison in Oglethorpe, Georgia, has filed this *pro se* 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action. Plaintiff also seeks leave to proceed without prepayment of the \$350.00 filing fee or security therefor pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). Based on plaintiff's submissions, the Court finds that plaintiff is unable to prepay the filing fee. Accordingly, the Court **GRANTS** plaintiff's motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* and waives the initial partial filing fee pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). However, plaintiff must nevertheless pay the full amount of the \$350.00 filing fee, as explained later in this order.

I. BACKGROUND

Plaintiff brings this action against Dr. DeWayne Ayers, medical doctor at Calhoun State Prison ("Calhoun"); Dr. Simmon Fulcher, Orthopedic Specialist at Augusta State Medical Prison ("ASMP"); and John Doe, Director of Health Services, Georgia Department of Corrections ("GDOC").

Plaintiff alleges that on November 3, 2001, he suffered an injury to his right wrist. Plaintiff further alleges that on August 28, 2003, Dr. Fulcher operated on plaintiff's right hand and wrist for

carpal tunnel syndrome. Apparently, plaintiff may have suffered complications from his surgery, including nerve damage, and needs corrective surgery to remedy the complications. Said corrective surgery, scheduled for June 14, 2005, was cancelled by the surgeon because she was not qualified to perform the surgery. According to plaintiff, he was told that an “orthopedic specialist” would have to perform the surgery and that Dr. Ayers, the doctor who treated plaintiff while plaintiff was at Calhoun, would have to schedule a consult. Plaintiff was returned to Calhoun without the necessary surgery. Thereafter, plaintiff alleges he spoke to a P.A. at Calhoun who told plaintiff that defendant Dr. Ayers has the “power” and “responsibility” to schedule outside appointments. It appears plaintiff never actually saw Dr. Ayers following the cancelled surgery; rather, they exchanged correspondence.

On July 14, 2005, plaintiff was returned to ASMP where he met with Dr. Fulcher. Dr. Fulcher allegedly informed plaintiff that plaintiff would have to live with his pain and numbness. The doctor also prescribed the medication Neurontin. Plaintiff alleges that as of the date of filing his complaint, no plans have been made for corrective surgery. Plaintiff believes that Dr. Ayers and Dr. Fulcher have intentionally denied him his surgery in order to avoid medical costs.

Plaintiff alleges that since 2005, he has endured constitutionally unacceptable medical care that caused needless pain and suffering, as well as numbness, and resulted in lasting physical difficulties that he bears to this day. As relief, plaintiff seeks damages and injunctive relief in the form of an order directing the defendants to stop delaying his medical care and provide corrective surgery on plaintiff’s right hand and wrist.

III. DISCUSSION

In *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976), the Supreme Court held that “deliberate indifference to serious medical needs of prisoners constitutes the ‘unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain’... proscribed by the Eighth Amendment.” “Deliberate indifference” has three components: 1) subjective knowledge of a risk of serious harm; 2) disregard of that risk; 3) by conduct that is more than mere negligence. *McElligott v. Foley*, 182 F.3d 1248, 1255 (11th Cir. 1999). The Supreme Court in *Estelle* determined that deliberate indifference may be shown by “intentionally denying or delaying access to medical care or intentionally interfering with the treatment once prescribed.” *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 104-05.

Every claim by a prisoner that he has not received adequate medical treatment, however, does not state a violation of the Eighth Amendment. *McElligott*, 182 F.3d at 1254. Mere allegations of negligence or malpractice do not amount to deliberate indifference. See *Campbell v. Sikes*, 169 F.3d 1353, 1363-72 (11th Cir. 1999) (explaining that medical malpractice cannot form the basis for Eighth Amendment liability). As a result, decisions by prison medical staff relating to the exercise of professional judgment, even though they may constitute medical malpractice, do not violate the Eighth Amendment. *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 107.

Considering plaintiff’s claims in light of the above standard, it is by no means clear that plaintiff has alleged deliberate indifference to serious medical needs sufficient to support an Eighth Amendment claim for inadequate medical care. Plaintiff clearly received medical care for his condition during his stay at Calhoun and plaintiff’s claims may ultimately be shown to constitute

mere negligence and not deliberate indifference. Because of the apparent severity of plaintiff's injuries and the fact that plaintiff is proceeding *pro se*, however, the Court will allow plaintiff's claims to go forward against all the defendants.¹

Accordingly, it is HEREBY ORDERED AND DIRECTED that service of all pleadings be made as provided by law upon the defendants, and that the defendants file a Waiver of Reply, an Answer, or such other response as may be appropriate under Rule 12 of the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE, 28 U.S.C. § 1915, and the ***Prison Litigation Reform Act***.

It is further ORDERED AND DIRECTED that a copy of this order be served upon plaintiff's custodian, if any.

DUTY TO ADVISE OF ADDRESS CHANGE

During the pendency of this action, each party shall at all times keep the clerk of this court and all opposing attorneys and/or parties advised of his current address. Failure to promptly advise the Clerk of any change of address may result in the dismissal of a party's pleadings filed herein.

DUTY TO PROSECUTE ACTION

Plaintiff is advised that he must diligently prosecute his complaint or face the possibility that it will be dismissed under Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for failure to prosecute. Defendants are advised that they are expected to diligently defend all allegations made against them and to file timely dispositive motions as hereinafter directed. This matter will be set down for trial

¹ With regard to the Doe defendant, the Court finds that plaintiff has adequately identified this party so that a specific person may be served with process and asked to answer plaintiff's complaint. Therefore, the Court will not dismiss plaintiff's claims against John Doe, GDOC Director of Health Services.

when the court determines that discovery has been completed and that all motions have been disposed of or the time for filing dispositive motions has passed.

FILING AND SERVICE OF MOTIONS, PLEADINGS, DISCOVERY AND CORRESPONDENCE

It is the responsibility of each party to file original motions, pleadings, and correspondence with the Clerk of court; to serve copies of all motions, pleadings, discovery, and correspondence upon opposing parties or counsel for opposing parties if they are represented; and to attach to said original motions, pleadings, and correspondence filed with the Clerk a certificate of service indicating who has been served and where (i.e., at what address), when service was made, and how service was accomplished (i.e., by U.S. Mail, by personal service, etc.). The Clerk of Court will not serve or forward copies of such motions, pleadings, and correspondence on behalf of the parties.

DISCOVERY

Plaintiff shall not commence discovery until an answer or dispositive motion has been filed on behalf of the defendants from whom discovery is sought by the plaintiff. The defendants shall not commence discovery until such time as an answer or dispositive motion has been filed. Once an answer or dispositive motion has been filed, the parties are authorized to seek discovery from one another as provided in the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE. The deposition of the plaintiff, a state/county prisoner, may be taken at any time during the time period hereinafter set out provided prior arrangements are made with his custodian. **Plaintiff is hereby advised that failure to submit to a deposition may result in the dismissal of his lawsuit under Rule 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that discovery (including depositions and interrogatories) shall be completed within 90 days of the date of filing of an answer or dispositive motion by the defendant

unless an extension is otherwise granted by the court upon a showing of good cause therefor or a protective order is sought by the defendants and granted by the court. This 90-day period shall run separately as to each plaintiff and each defendant beginning on the date of filing of each defendant's answer and/or dispositive motion. The scheduling of a trial may be advanced upon notification from the parties that no further discovery is contemplated or that discovery has been completed prior to the deadline.

Discovery materials shall not be filed with the Clerk of Court. No party shall be required to respond to any discovery not directed to him or served upon him by the opposing counsel/part. The undersigned incorporates herein those parts of the **Local Rules** imposing the following limitations on discovery: except with written permission of the court first obtained, **INTERROGATORIES** may not exceed TWENTY-FIVE (25) to each party, **REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS AND THINGS** under Rule 34 of the **FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE** may not exceed TEN (10) requests to each party, and **REQUESTS FOR ADMISSIONS** under Rule 36 of the **FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE** may not exceed FIFTEEN (15) requests to each party. No party shall be required to respond to any such requests which exceed these limitations.

REQUESTS FOR DISMISSAL AND/OR JUDGMENT

Dismissal of this action or requests for judgment will not be considered by the court absent the filing of a separate motion therefor accompanied by a brief/memorandum of law citing supporting authorities. Dispositive motions should be filed at the earliest time possible, but in any event no later than thirty (30) days after the close of discovery unless otherwise directed by the court.

DIRECTIONS TO CUSTODIAN OF PLAINTIFF

Following the payment of the required initial partial filing fee or the waiving of the payment of same, the Warden of the institution wherein plaintiff is incarcerated, or the Sheriff of any county wherein he is held in custody, and any successor custodians, shall each month cause to be remitted to the Clerk of this court twenty percent (20%) of the preceding month's income credited to plaintiff's account at said institution until the \$350.00 filing fee has been paid in full. In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2), plaintiff's custodian is hereby authorized to forward payments from the prisoner's account to the Clerk of Court each month until the filing fee is paid in full, provided the amount in the account exceeds \$10.00.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that collection of monthly payments from plaintiff's trust fund account shall continue until the entire \$350.00 has been collected, notwithstanding the dismissal of plaintiff's lawsuit or the granting of judgment against him prior to the collection of the full filing fee.

PLAINTIFF'S OBLIGATION TO PAY FILING FEE

Pursuant to provisions of the ***Prison Litigation Reform Act***, in the event plaintiff is hereafter released from the custody of the State of Georgia or any county thereof, he shall remain obligated to pay any balance due on the filing fee in this proceeding until said amount has been paid in full; plaintiff shall continue to remit monthly payments as required by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). Collection from the plaintiff of any balance due on the filing fee by any means permitted by law is hereby authorized in the event plaintiff is released from custody and fails to remit payments. In addition, plaintiff's complaint is subject to dismissal if he has the ability to make monthly payments and fails to do so.

ELECTION TO PROCEED BEFORE THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

28 U.S.C. § 636(c)(1) authorizes and empowers full-time magistrate judges to conduct any and all proceedings in a jury or nonjury civil matter and to order the entry of judgment in a case

upon the written consent of the parties. If the parties desire for the United States Magistrate Judge to hear this case through trial and the entry of judgment, they may obtain the necessary consent forms from the Clerk of the Court.

SO ORDERED, this 9th day of May, 2006.

/s/ Richard L. Hodge
RICHARD L. HODGE
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES

PURSUANT TO THE COURT'S ORDER REGARDING DISCOVERY SET OUT ABOVE, NO DISCOVERY SHALL BE PERMITTED IN THIS CASE UNTIL AN ANSWER OR DISPOSITIVE MOTION (e.g., MOTION TO DISMISS, MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT, MOTION FOR JUDGMENT ON THE PLEADINGS) HAS BEEN FILED BY THE DEFENDANT(S).

PURSUANT TO THE FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE, DISCOVERY (DEPOSITIONS, INTERROGATORIES, REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS AND THINGS, REQUESTS FOR ADMISSIONS, ETC., AND RESPONSES THERETO) SHALL NOT BE FILED WITH THE CLERK OF COURT. NOTE THAT THIS IS A CHANGE IN THE PROCEDURE HERETOFORE FOLLOWED IN THIS DISTRICT.

DO NOT FILE ANY DISCOVERY WITH THE COURT UNLESS YOU ARE SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED TO DO SO BY THE COURT OR UNLESS FILING IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT OR CONTEST A MOTION TO COMPEL DISCOVERY, OBJECTION TO DISCOVERY, DISPOSITIVE MOTION, OR SIMILAR MOTION. THE CLERK IS DIRECTED TO RETURN ANY SUBMITTED DISCOVERY TO THE PARTY SUBMITTING IT UNLESS IT IS FILED PURSUANT TO AN ORDER OF THE COURT OR IN SUPPORT OF A MOTION TO COMPEL, OBJECTION TO DISCOVERY, DISPOSITIVE MOTION, OR SIMILAR MOTION.

